The Washington Post
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25 August

Dear Harold,

Thanks for your letter of 8/19. I think your point that the official investigation offers no leads is well-taken.

I have also received your letter to Jodie Allen and your critique of the "Fourth Tramp." I leave to the LaFontaines to respond in detail; I need to reread it because you characteristically have marshalled a large amount of evidence and passion.

I must protest your tone though. You persist in treating the LaFontaines (and me) as idiots. Naturally, I think you are wrong but, more importantly, I think it does no service to serious researchers trying to uncover the truth about the assassination. It is simply stupid to attack us for not reading the FBI memo on Elrod. We had in detail repeatedly. We didn't omit or conceal Elrod's alcoholism; we noted it and said his testimony had to be treated with caution. You dismiss the possibility that Elrod's story could be true without really dealing with how it matched Ellsworth's description of

the case; you don't deal with the fact that Mason, ~~[illegible]~~ the (would-be) recipient of the guns transported on Nov. 18, 1963, just so happened to have provided the ammunition used in the shooting; you foolishly impute to the LaFontaine's the view that the Nov. 18, 1963 gun deal was supplying weapons for the 2nd invasion of Cuba, something that they never said and don't believe.

At the risk of being impertinent Mr. Weisberg, grow up! We're all in this together. You have no monopoly on insight into the assassination. You have done heroic work on the assassination and every one of us in your debt. We acknowledge that and hope to accomplish what you hope to accomplish: finding the truth. You can help us in this effort by providing constructive criticism, not a torrent of abuse which hurts me in the already terribly difficult task of convincing this paper's timid leadership that the assassination <u>must</u> be properly investigated. Your superior tone and sweeping dismissal are personally hurtful

to me, a great admirer of yours, and professionally damaging to a rare Washington journalist who, with his own limited resources and fallible judgement, hopes to continue your work. It also calls into question your own judgement because people whose work on this subject you respect (Jeff Frank, George Lardner, Paul Hoch and John Newman) all read the 4th Tramp before publication and did not object to its appearance in the Washington Post. Are they all fools and idiots who have acquiesced in the publication of nonsense? I don't think so and I don't think you do either.

That doesn't mean the story is perfect or that all its speculations are warranted; the La Fontaines are more than capable of defending their work. Your wealth of knowledge and constructive criticism could help them and me advance this story, though, and that is what I earnestly wish for. There is a difference between a prevaricator like Posner and good reporters like the LaFontaines. The LaFontaines and I certainly do not deserve

the same kind of invective that you properly give Posner. Please.

I will re-read your critique carefully and try to learn from it not take it personally. I will also try to provide you more information that did not appear in the story that indicates just how fruitful the [redacted] LaFontaine's work is. I hope to gain your support for their work. [redacted] I believe that their reporting of previously unknown events in Dallas (the nexus of CIA-paid anti-castro Cubans and the Mason-Nonte gun-runners) is converging with John Newmans reporting on the recently declassified CIA files to open up an entirely new perspective on the Kennedy assassination.

Help us. Do not insult us.

Yours sincerely,

cc: Ray and Mary LaFontaine
Paul Hoch